United Nations A/C.1/56/PV.20

General Assembly
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Official Records

First Committee
20th meeting
Wednesday, 31 October 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

Action on all draft resolutions submitted under all agenda items

The Chairman: This afternoon the Committee will take action on those draft resolutions that are contained in informal working paper No. 3, which has just been distributed. But, as life can always be unexpected, I have been informed that draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.24, "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas", is not yet ready for action. We will get back to cluster 1 on nuclear weapons on Friday. I ask for the Committee's understanding.

We will proceed to the other clusters. In cluster 2, other weapons of mass destruction, we have draft decision A/C.1/56/L.11, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction".

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions on draft decision A/C.1/56/L.11 before the voting.

Mr. Durrani (Pakistan): I have taken the floor to state that Pakistan is fully committed to the goal of strengthening the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in all its aspects. We believe that a balanced and effective BWC protocol acceptable to all the States parties should be concluded, as provided for in the 1994 mandate of the Ad Hoc Group. Pakistan will continue to work for the fulfilment of that mandate.

We had hoped that, again this year, the General Assembly would adopt a consensus BWC resolution reiterating our collective resolve to further strengthen the Convention and calling upon the upcoming Fifth Review Conference of the BWC to consider the work of the Ad Hoc Group and to decide its future course of action.

We are thus disappointed that the General Assembly will adopt not a BWC resolution, but a terse procedural decision. While Pakistan can go along with the draft decision, we sincerely hope that the departure from resolution to decision will not be misinterpreted. Enhancing the effectiveness of the BWC in a comprehensive manner remains a priority for the international community. We are confident that all the States parties to the BWC will continue to work towards that end within the framework of the Convention. It is only through the multilateral approach that we can effectively safeguard and promote our collective interests.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The negotiations on a protocol comprehensively to strengthen the effectiveness of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), which had gone on for almost seven years, came to an abrupt halt last July because the basic approach of the protocol was negated.

We deeply regret this development. We had hoped that the General Assembly at this session could adopt a

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resolution on the BWC that would identify the reasons for the negotiations' being cut short; emphasize the necessity of global multilateral efforts towards the comprehensive strengthening of the BWC; reconfirm the ongoing validity of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group; and call upon all States parties, in particular those with large bio-industries, to pursue the negotiations on the protocol within the framework of the Ad Hoc Group of the States parties to the BWC.

However, because of resistance from certain quarters, the draft resolution on the BWC informally circulated earlier has been downgraded to a two-sentence draft decision of little substance. The Chinese delegation can go along with this draft decision, but we have to say that we are not satisfied with it, since it completely neglects the difficult situation facing the protocol negotiations.

In line with the principled position that I mentioned above, China, in the upcoming BWC Review Conference and all other related forums, will continue to work with other BWC States parties in an effort to achieve a comprehensive strengthening of the effectiveness of the BWC.

Mr. Antonov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation adheres to the idea of the strengthening of the regime of the Convention on the prohibition of biological and toxin weapons. For six years our delegation participated actively in the work of the Ad Hoc Group of the States Parties to the Convention to establish a verification mechanism for the Convention. Like most of our colleagues, we were disappointed with the way the situation developed during the last session of the Ad Hoc Group. Under the circumstances, our preference would naturally have been the adoption of a substantive resolution that would have established a political basis to continue the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group and to continue its work.

Nevertheless, taking the present situation into account, we have decided to agree with the proposal to replace the draft resolution on the Convention with a procedural draft decision and to support the consensus on the draft decision. We assume, however, that the issue of continuing the negotiations in the Ad Hoc Group will be considered most seriously during the Fifth Review Conference on the Convention in November and December this year in Geneva. We would hope that at that Conference it will be decided how to implement the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group in these new conditions.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My country would have preferred that we adopt a substantive text under this item on the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). But we will join in the support for the draft decision that has been presented, with the understanding that it is a compromise formula that we have found in order not to break the traditional consensus on previous resolutions on the BWC in the General Assembly.

Cuba continues to be committed to the effort to improve the Biological Weapons Convention, which began about 10 years ago. Much progress has been made in the Ad Hoc Group, which was negotiating measures in Geneva in order to strengthen the Convention. Unfortunately, these negotiations were abruptly paralysed by a single country; even more worrying is the fact that it is one of the three depositories of the Biological Weapons Convention.

Nevertheless, my country will remain committed to the efforts that are made and to the mandate given to the Ad Hoc Group in 1994. We will strive to ensure that future measures to strengthen the Convention will continue to be developed and adopted in a multilateral and non-discriminatory context, not in contexts of limited participation.

Mr. Baeidi Nejad (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation, as a traditional sponsor draft resolutions on this subject — a draft resolution which of course was not submitted this year — like delegations that have spoken before me, would like to express its regret that in this very crucial year of negotiations on the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) protocol, we are shifting from a substantive resolution to a simple draft decision on the issue by the Committee. Since this action could be interpreted as a wise decision, in order not to expose the differences and not to endanger the consolidated support among the States parties to the Convention on this highly crucial objective, my delegation decided to join the consensus. We hope, however, that this action will stimulate serious negotiations in Geneva during the Fifth BWC Review Conference on how best the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group may be completed as soon as possible.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote or position. The Committee will

now proceed to take action on draft decision A/C.1/56/L.11.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will take a decision on draft decision A/C.1/56/L.11, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction". This draft decision was introduced by the representative of Hungary at the 17th meeting, on 30 October.

In connection with draft decision A/C.1/56/L.11, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction", I wish to put on record the following statement on financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General.

By operative paragraph 1 of the draft decision, the General Assembly would decide to request the Secretary-General to continue to render the necessary assistance to the depository Governments of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, to provide such services as may be required for the implementation of the decisions and recommendations of the Review Conferences and the Special Conference of the States parties to the Convention, held from 19 to 30 September 1994, and to render the necessary assistance and to provide such services as may be required for the Fifth Review Conference, to be held in Geneva from 19 November to 7 December 2001.

The Secretary-General wishes to draw the attention of Member States to the fact that following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 55/40 of 20 November 2000, a Preparatory Committee for the Fifth Review Conference of the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention was formed, open to all States parties to the Convention. At the meeting of the Preparatory Committee which took place from 25 to 27 April 2001 in Geneva, the cost estimates for servicing the Preparatory Committee and the Fifth Review Conference of the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention were approved. In this connection, it was recalled that in accordance with the practice followed for previous disarmament conferences and related preparatory committees, the costs were shared among the States parties participating in such meetings, based on the United Nations scale of assessments, prorated to take into account the number of States parties participating in the meetings. States that were not parties but that accepted the invitation to take part in those meetings share the costs to the extent of their respective rates of assessment under the United Nations scale of assessments. Consequently, no additional costs will be borne by the regular budget of the Organization. Furthermore, all activities related to international conventions or treaties that, under their respective legal arrangements, ought to be financed outside the regular budget of the United Nations may be undertaken by the Secretariat only when sufficient funding is received, in advance, from States parties.

The Chairman: The sponsor of draft decision A/C.1/56/L.11 has expressed the wish that the draft decision be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If there is no objection I shall take it that the Committee wishes to adopt the draft decision.

Draft decision A/C.1/56/L.11 was adopted.

The Chairman: Under cluster 6, "Confidence-building measures, including transparency in armaments", we turn to draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40, entitled "Transparency in armaments". In that connection, I call on delegations wishing to explain their positions on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40 before action is taken on the draft resolution.

Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): As Chairman of the Arab Group for this month, my delegation wishes to explain the Group's position on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40, entitled "Transparency in armaments". As in successive previous years, members of the League of Arab States have already stated their position on transparency in armaments, including on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Our position is clear and consistent and is based on the general principles of our position on international and regional disarmament, specifically the particular nature of the situation in the Middle East. The position of the Arab States in that regard may be summarized as follows.

First of all, the States members of the League of Arab States favour transparency in armaments as a way to strengthen international peace and security. The

League of Arab States reaffirms that to be successful any transparency mechanism should be guided by specific principles that are balanced, global and non-discriminatory and should strengthen regional, national and international security for all States in conformity with international law.

Secondly, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms was the fruit of a first, long-awaited attempt to address the issue of transparency at the international level. As an important international confidence-building measure and as an early warning tool, the Register is entirely non-controversial. But there have been a number of problems with the Register, in particular the fact that nearly half of the States Members of the United Nations have consistently failed to provide information to the Register.

Thirdly, States members of the League of Arab States believe that the scope of the Register should be broadened, especially in view of the fact that experience in recent years has shown the Register to be limited to seven categories of conventional weapons and is thus incomplete in its international scope. States members of the League of Arab States and other States believe that the Register is insufficient to meet all security concerns. The success of the Register is thus linked to the position of those States that truly wish to attain transparency and confidence-building. We believe that a broadened Register that would conform to the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, which established it, should include information on sophisticated conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction, specifically nuclear weapons and sophisticated technologies with military applications. That would make the Register more balanced, more comprehensive and less discriminatory, and would attract a greater number of permanent participants.

The Middle East is a special case in that regard. We note in particular a lack of qualitative balance in armament in that region. Transparency and trust should be based on a complete and balanced approach. In the Middle East, transparency in conventional weapons alongside a lack of transparency in more sophisticated and more modern weaponry — in particular more destructive arms such as weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons — constitutes an unbalanced, incomplete approach that cannot attain the desired results.

With respect to the present situation in the Middle East, we note that Israel continues to occupy Arab territories and to possess the most sophisticated weapons, including the most deadly weapons of mass destruction. Israel is the only State in the region that is not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Israel continues to ignore repeated international appeals to accede to that Treaty and to subject all its nuclear facilities to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. At the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, parties to the Treaty reaffirmed the need for Israel to accede to the Treaty and to submit all its nuclear facilities to comprehensive IAEA safeguards.

Fourthly, the States members of the League of Arab States regret that the Group of Governmental Experts tasked to report in 2000 on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and other expert groups have failed to formulate a way to broaden the scope of the Register to include the possession of military hardware, domestically manufactured or internationally acquired, and sophisticated weapons and weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. That is inconsistent with resolution 46/36 L, which established the Register.

As a result of that failure, the Register in its present form is not a real tool for achieving the kind of trust we want. We believe that these concerns should be addressed in order to ensure proper international cooperation in this area so that the Register can play a role as an early warning tool and as an instrument for confidence-building that we can all count on.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): At the outset, I should like to endorse the statement made by the delegation of Libya on behalf of the Group of Arab States.

My delegation has asked for the floor in order to explain its vote before the voting. Egypt used to introduce the draft resolutions on transparency in armaments, but has not done so for the last two years. We therefore think it important to state our position in this regard before the vote.

Since the adoption, in 1991, of General Assembly resolution 46/36 L — which established the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms — Egypt has contributed faithfully to supporting the principle of transparency in military matters. Egypt has also supported the objectives behind the establishment of the Register.

Egypt supported the annual General Assembly resolutions on transparency in armaments from 1991 to 1993, resolutions that were adopted without a vote. However, Egypt began to abstain in 1994 when the Group of Government Experts failed to reach agreement on aspects related to the further development of the Register. The Group convened twice, in 1997 and 2000, but was, unfortunately, unable to reach agreement on further developing the Register. We hope that will not be the case during the 2003 meeting of the Group.

In our view, for the Register to attain its objectives as a truly significant confidence-building measure capable of eradicating suspicions and misperceptions — and thereby contributing to enhancing security and stability — it should be based on the following requirements.

First, the Register should be a universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory confidence-building measure. Secondly, it should ensure equal rights and obligations for all States. Thirdly, it should address the legitimate security concerns of all States. Lastly, it should provide for the broadest degree of transparency in all areas of armaments in an unselective manner.

In its present form, the United Nations Register may meet the security concerns of certain States; yet it does not adequately meet those of Egypt and many other States. Only an expanded Register that provides a comprehensive picture and covers, in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner, the overall military capabilities of States, can serve the cause of transparency in armaments. We can, therefore, only conclude that other countries do not share our enthusiasm, and that they wish to limit the transparency exercise to certain types of conventional weapons, namely, those that currently make up the Register. Such an approach is not consistent with agreements reached in 1991 at the General Assembly regarding the early expansion of the Register's scope.

Finally, we wish to emphasize that we are unimpressed by the prospects of possible eventual development of the Register with regard to an expansion of its scope. Such a prospect seems remote in view of the apparent lack of political will on the part of the international community to faithfully embrace the principles and objectives of transparency, or to apply them in a comprehensive, non-discriminatory and equitable manner. It is for this reason that my delegation will abstain on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.40.

Mr. Boisson (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): I simply wish to express the wish of the Government of Monaco to join the sponsors of this draft resolution, which we believe to be extremely important. I would therefore ask that the Secretary take note of our sponsorship.

Mr. Atieh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Libya on behalf of the Group of Arab States. With regard to transparency in the area of disarmament, my delegation would like to reaffirm its total support for the position adopted by the Group of Arab States members of the League of Arab States. That position was reflected in document A/55/299/Add.2.

The Syrian Arab Republic wishes to reiterate its full support for the general concept of developing an international environment free from the use of force or the threat of the use of force, a community regulated by the principles of peace, equity and justice. While reaffirming our readiness to participate in all international efforts grounded in good will and the need to address that goal, we would like to draw the First Committee's attention to the fact that the draft resolution entitled "Transparency in armaments" does not take into account the special situation in the Middle East, where the Arab-Israeli conflict is continuing because of Israel's continued occupation of Arab territories.

Israel continues to refuse to accept the pertinent resolutions of the Security Council. It also possesses the most destructive and sophisticated of weapons. It is capable of manufacturing all sorts of sophisticated weapons and of maintaining arsenals of such weapons in the region, including nuclear weapons. All of this shows that the transparency claimed by Israel in the area of armaments covers only a small portion of what it actually possesses in the way of the most destructive and sophisticated weapons.

It is for this reason that my delegation will abstain in the voting on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.40.

Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman): I am taking the floor in order to explain the position of my delegation with

regard to the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.40, entitled "Transparency in armaments". Before doing so, allow me to say that we fully associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Libya in his capacity as the Chairman of the Group of Arab States.

We have never questioned the noble objectives behind the introduction of this draft resolution in the First Committee. Nor have we had any misconceptions about the Register of Conventional Arms. We believe it is a very important component that will buttress the disarmament regime, and we support it. In previous years, my delegation has fully supported the draft resolution introduced in the First Committee on this topic. However, since the last session, my delegation has not participated in the voting, for very valid reasons.

After very carefully examining the Register — and although we still believe it to be a very strong and noble component that should be strengthened and supported — we think it is unconvincing. We believe that for it to become fully operational, certain legitimate concerns that have been raised before the First Committee by a number of delegations from my region, and from outside my region, have to be addressed. We believe that transparency does not end with certain categories of arms, and that it should be expanded to include other categories of weapons as well.

As I have said, on the basis of our convictions and trust in the noble objectives behind this draft resolution, we will not participate in the vote.

Mr. Baeidi Nejad (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation will abstain on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.40, entitled "Transparency in armaments", consistent with its position in recent years and with its continuing advocacy of a more comprehensive approach towards transparency in armaments.

The process of transparency in armaments has faced difficulties in recent years owing to the fact that resolution 46/36 L, as the basis of the whole initiative and the main terms of reference for our deliberations on the subject, has not been fully and truly implemented. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, as the only active component within this framework, was not supposed to be the only product of the transparency measures but, rather, a first step towards initiating such transparency in all kinds of armaments, including weapons of mass destruction and, in particular, nuclear weapons.

It is unfortunate that the initiation of transparency measures on nuclear weapons has been excluded. Discussions on this issue also proved to be at a deadlock during the most recent meeting of the Panel of Governmental Experts. My delegation does not find this situation a promising one, and is concerned that it might even affect the contribution of Member States to the United Nations Register. The development of a comprehensive Register, which has been an objective since the beginning of the process, is unfortunately far from being realized.

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40 has not touched upon these fundamental elements, which need to be seriously considered and addressed as part of the overall objective of promoting transparency in armaments. My delegation will therefore not be in a position to support this draft resolution. But I would like to express the wish of my delegation that, in the course of the coming year, more efforts will be made to craft a draft resolution that can be supported by all Member States of the United Nations.

The Chairman: I have no more requests for the floor before action is taken on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40. If that is still the case, let me ask the Committee to proceed to take action on the draft resolution. Separate votes have been requested on two operative paragraphs of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40, the first one being operative paragraph 4 (b) and the second one being operative paragraph 6. After voting on these two paragraphs, we will vote on the draft resolution as a whole. First, let us proceed in order.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40, entitled "Transparency in armaments".

This draft resolution was introduced by the representative of the Netherlands at the 16th meeting of the First Committee, on 29 October. The sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/56/L.40 and in document A/C.1/56/INF/2. In addition, the following countries have also become sponsors: Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Burundi,

Cape Verde, Cyprus, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Gabon, Georgia, Jamaica, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Mali, the Marshall Islands, Mauritius, the Federated States of Micronesia, Monaco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Niger, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, the Republic of Korea, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Swaziland, Tonga, Venezuela and Zambia.

In connection with draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40, entitled "Transparency in armaments", I wish to put on record the following statements on its financial implication, on behalf of the Secretary-General.

By paragraphs 4 (b) and 5 of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts to be convened in 2003 on the basis of equitable geographical representation, to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, taking into account the work of the Conference on Disarmament and the views expressed by Member States and the report of the Secretary-General on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, with a view to a decision at the Assembly's fifty-eighth session. The Secretary-General is further requested to implement the recommendations in his 2000 report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, and to ensure that sufficient resources are made available for the Secretariat to operate and maintain the Register.

Provisions have been made in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003, which would allow the Department for Disarmament Affairs to provide the appropriate services to three sessions of the proposed group of governmental experts to be held in New York. Resources would also be available for consultancy services to assist the Secretariat in preparing a report for consideration by the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. In that connection, the activities called for in paragraphs 4 (b) and 5 of the draft resolution are programmed in the proposed programme budget for the 2002-2003 biennium under section 4, on disarmament. It appears under subprogramme 3, entitled "Conventional arms (including practical disarmament measures)", paragraph 4.29 (a) (iii); and subprogramme 4, entitled "Monitoring, database and information", paragraph 4.33 (b) (vii), of the proposed programme budget. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40, its implementation would not require additional resources within the context of the proposed 2002-2003 programme budget, provided it is approved by the General Assembly to undertake the activities requested in paragraph 4 (b) and paragraph 5 of the draft resolution.

The Committee will now proceed to take action on operative paragraph 4 (b), which reads:

> "*Requests* the Secretary-General, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts to be convened in 2003, on the basis of equitable geographical representation, to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, taking into account the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the views expressed by Member States and the reports of the Secretary-General on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, with a view to a decision at its fifty-eighth session."

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Swaziland,

Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syrian Arab Republic

Abstaining:

Algeria, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Myanmar, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen

Operative paragraph 4 (b) of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40 was retained by 123 votes to 4, with 13 abstentions.

The Chairman: Let us now proceed to the vote on operative paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40. I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to take action on operative paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40, which reads:

"*Invites* the Conference on Disarmament to consider continuing its work undertaken in the field of transparency in armaments".

In favour:

Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Algeria, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Mexico, Myanmar, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Yemen

Operative paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40 was retained by 123 votes to none, with 17 abstentions.

The Chairman: We will now proceed to the vote on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40 as a whole. I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40 as a whole.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg,

Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zambia

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Algeria, Bahrain, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Pakistan, Qatar, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40 was adopted by 121 votes to none, with 22 abstentions.

The Chairman: At this point, I would like to call on delegations wishing to speak in explanation of their position following the vote.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): As explicitly stated in General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is a record of legitimate arms transfers between sovereign States. However, since 1996, in open defiance of the provisions of the above-mentioned resolution, a certain country registered its arms sales to the Taiwan province of China in the form of a footnote.

United States arms sales to Taiwan constitute a grave infringement on China's sovereignty and flagrant interference in China's internal affairs. The registration of such sales has changed the nature of the United Nations Register. By registering its arms sales to Taiwan, the United States has in fact created in the United Nations two Chinas, and one China and one Taiwan. China cannot accept this, and therefore it has been forced to suspend its reporting to the Register since 1998. Until and unless the United States takes steps to rectify its erroneous practice and the solemn nature of the Register is restored, China will obviously not be in a position to submit its report to the Register, and therefore China cannot support resolution A/C.1/56/L.40.

In the light of the above, the Chinese delegation abstained in the vote on the resolution. We call once again on the country concerned to immediately rectify its mistakes and to create the necessary conditions for the Chinese side to be able to resume its participation in the Register.

Mr. Maandi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): My delegation was not able to vote in favour of the draft resolution entitled "Transparency in armaments", a matter to which my country attaches great importance. Even though it involves a number of elements that require special attention, we consider that this draft resolution remains insensitive to the concerns of many countries that would like to provide balanced treatment on the elements of transparency in armaments.

The text in question continues to perceive transparency through the frameworks defined in operative paragraphs 4 (b) and 6 and is captive to a partial and narrow approach that prevents us from going beyond the simple transfer of conventional armaments. Moreover, the experts' report says that this text is limited to the register of conventional weapons and does not at all take into consideration the need expressed on many occasions to expand it to include other arms and arms categories.

We remain convinced that the establishment of the Register as a means of transparency will not be guaranteed without universal and honest participation and in the absence of an approach that would affect all aspects linked to armaments and all categories of arms. Balanced treatment of the various transparency elements in the area of armaments should not continue, in our opinion, through a selective approach — and therefore a discriminatory one — but rather should aim at the establishment of a register with universal and comprehensive means, which requires consideration of integral aspects such as national production capacity and related purchases, arms stockpiling, the rapid proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, and advance technology having military applications.

My delegation is pleased that the Committee is seized again this year with a single text on transparency and hopes that the sponsors of the draft resolution will take into account the concerns of many delegations so that the draft can enjoy the broadest support.

Mr. Myint (Myanmar): I have asked for the floor to explain my delegation's position on the draft resolution on transparency in armaments, contained in document A/C.1/56/L.40.

We believe that transparency in armaments should be universal, non-discriminatory and on a voluntary basis. It is difficult to say how far we can exercise transparency in armaments. We feel that only the major arms exporters and importers can provide an answer to this question correctly. It should further be borne in mind that there should also be transparency on weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.

My delegation respects the good intentions of the sponsors of this draft resolution. At the same time, we are of the view that practical and achievable measures should also be addressed in the draft resolution. We have difficulties with some of the elements in the draft resolution. We have reservations on paragraphs 4 (b) and 6. We believe that it is premature and ambitious at this point for the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts to be convened in 2003, as called for in paragraph 4 (b).

At the same time, we do not see enough reason yet to invite the Conference on Disarmament to consider continuing its work undertaken in the field of transparency in armaments, as mentioned in paragraph 6. The Conference on Disarmament is not yet in a position to agree even on a programme of work for 2001, due to the differing approaches to banning fissile materials, nuclear disarmament and security assurances. Therefore, we should not pre-judge the process in the Conference on Disarmament. We need more time to study transparency in armaments in depth.

For these reasons, my delegation abstained in the voting on paragraphs 4 (b) and 6 and on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40 as a whole.

Mr. Goussous (Jordan): Very briefly, I should like to explain the position of my country with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40.

My country has never refrained from reporting to the Register and has regularly reported to it. The Register is a very important tool. It represents the long-awaited attempt at the international level to strengthen international security and peace. It is a simple fact that we believe in the enlargement of the Register to include not only the limited seven categories of conventional arms, but also all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. Such an enlargement of the Register would be in conformity with General Assembly resolution 46/36 L, adopted in 1991, which established the Register.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Cuba supported draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.40 on transparency in armaments as an extension of our recognition of the value and significance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

It is well known that Cuba has participated in the Register from its very inception. A Cuban expert on conventional weapons was a member of the Group of Governmental Experts appointed by the Secretary-General to analyse the operation of the Register through the mandates of earlier resolutions. The work of such groups has been arduous and we have attentively studied every one of their conclusions.

As in previous years, my delegation abstained in the separate voting on paragraph 6 because we do not endorse the idea that the Conference on Disarmament should undertake an analysis of the theme of transparency in armaments now that its debate on that item has been concluded. With patient work, we have managed to increase the number of countries participating in the Register and we are convinced that an important role was played to that end by the resolutions of the General Assembly in this area.

The Chairman: We shall now proceed, on the basis of working paper No. 3, to cluster 7 on disarmament machinery. In this cluster, we have draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.50, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific".

The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.50.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.50, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific", was introduced by the representative of Nepal at the 17th meeting, on 30 October.

The sponsors of the draft resolution are listed in documents A/C.1/56/L.50 and A/C.1/56/INF/2. In addition, the following countries have also become co-sponsors of the draft resolution: the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Samoa and Tonga. In this connection, I would like to draw the attention of members to a statement, contained in document A/C.1/56/L.57, submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

The Chairman: The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.50 have expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.50 was adopted.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of Nepal for a general statement.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): In light of the fact that draft resolution L.50, just adopted by consensus, contains operative paragraph 6, which orders the Secretary-General to ensure the physical operation of the Regional Centre from Kathmandu within six months of the date of signature of the host country agreement; and also considering L.57, the statement from the Secretary-General that mentions that consultations would continue between the Department for Disarmament Affairs and His Majesty's Government of Nepal concerning physical operation of the Centre, my delegation deems it appropriate to brief the delegations about the latest status of the host country agreement.

His Majesty's Government of Nepal, being fully aware of its obligations as host to the Centre, has formally communicated to the Department for Disarmament Affairs its willingness to sign the host country agreement as proposed by the United Nations. Nepal was looking forward to signing that agreement during the first week of October. Our delegation was busy formulating the contents of the draft, which suggested that the host country agreement would have been signed by the time this Committee took action on the draft. The original draft contained a separate paragraph to welcome the host country agreement, and consequently we had inserted a specific date for the beginning of the physical operation of the Centre from Kathmandu, which was 31 December 2001.

At that time, when all else was all right, to our utmost disappointment the Department for Disarmament Affairs informed our Mission, on 17 October, of some revisions, one of which is unacceptable to any host country, and that concerns the provision of immunities and privileges to United Nations officers irrespective of their nationality. No host country — so far as the other two host countries are concerned — has agreed to such a provision.

The difficulty arose because of two clear reasons. One involved procedure. When the host Government authorized the permanent representatives here, there was no reference to new elements, and once authorized, the permanent representative would not be able to sign a text that has undergone changes without the approval of the authorizing Government.

Secondly, the new provision on granting immunities and privileges even to nationals of the host country can hardly be accepted by any Member State. There is no reason why Nepal should be an exception to this.

However, the Permanent Representative of Nepal met with the United Nations Legal Counsel and discussed the letter being requested. He agreed to go ahead with the text proposed before 17 October and to start negotiations for new provisions so that physical operation of the Centre could move forward. Despite assurances that the Legal Counsel would take up the issue with the Department for Disarmament Affairs and help facilitate early signature of the host country agreement, the Permanent Mission has not been provided any information on this matter so far.

As I mentioned before, the revised text communicated to us on 17 October cannot be agreed without being reviewed by our authorities in Kathmandu. That delay thus caused in signing the host country agreement is not at all the result of lack of commitment on the part of His Majesty's Government of Nepal. This is the reality that my delegation believes should be known to all of us, whose only intention is to see the Regional Centre function physically from Kathmandu without further delay.

The Chairman: Let me now refer to cluster 8 on our paper number 3, which is called "Other disarmament measures". We have here draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.3/Rev.1, entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security". I would like to call upon delegations who wish to address the Committee to explain their position or vote before action is taken on this draft.

I see no requests for the floor. The Committee will therefore proceed to take action on draft resolution L.3/Rev.1. I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.3/Rev.1, entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security". This draft resolution was introduced by the representative of the Russian Federation at the 17th meeting, on 30 October.

In connection with draft resolution L.3/Rev.1, I wish to put on record the following statement on financial implications, on behalf of the Secretary-General.

By operative paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.3/Rev.1, the General Assembly would request the Secretary-General to consider existing and potential threats in the sphere of information security and possible cooperative measures to address them, as well as to conduct a study on relevant international concepts aimed at strengthening the security of global information and telecommunications systems, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts to be established in 2004, appointed by him on the basis of equitable geographic distribution and with the help of Member States in a position to render such assistance, and to submit a report on its outcome to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

It is envisaged that the group of experts would hold its sessions in New York according to the following schedule: one session in 2004, and two sessions in 2005. The conference-servicing requirements at full cost for the sessions to be held in 2004 and 2005 are estimated to be $569,600. Such requirements would be considered under section 2, General Assembly affairs and conference services, in the context of the budget outline and the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

It is envisaged that there will be non-conference-servicing requirements to allow the Department for Disarmament Affairs to provide the necessary substantive services to the sessions of the proposed group of governmental experts to be held in New York in 2004 and 2005. Preliminary estimates of such requirements amount to $286,900, as follows: $250,000 for travel and subsistence of experts; $21,500 for consultancy services, including travel expenses; and $15,400 for three months of general temporary assistance for support services. These provisions would be reflected in the budget outline and the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 under section 4, Disarmament.

Therefore, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.3/Rev.1, the related conference-servicing and non-conferencing-servicing requirements would be considered in the context of the budget outline and the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005.

The Chairman: Thank you. As we can see, nothing comes cheap. The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that it be adopted by this Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.3/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman: Let me now turn your attention to cluster 1, nuclear weapons. Here we have draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.6, entitled "Missiles". Before we proceed to take action, I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran for a general statement on the matter.

Mr. Baeidi Nejad (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have requested the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.6, entitled "Missiles", under agenda item 74 (d). This year is the third consecutive year that my delegation has introduced such a draft resolution for consideration and action by the General Assembly.

The structure and fundamentals of each of these resolutions have been based on four major pillars, the first of which is the necessity for the international community to embark upon consideration of the issue of missiles, which has now been rightly placed on the disarmament agenda. We are pleased that, with the support of the international community, this issue of

vital importance is being considered for the first time ever within the framework of the United Nations.

Secondly, as concerns the necessity for a balanced approach towards missiles, any measure with regard to missiles should be non-discriminatory, multilateral and universal in nature. This principle entails initiatives and measures, short of multilateral and universal recognition, which will not be conducive to the establishment of a viable regime to deal with missiles.

Thirdly, as regards the need to address the issue of missiles in all their aspects, missiles are currently integrated within the overall national policy of States, not only in relation to security, but also in the broader context of development policy. Military doctrines of States, as well as other related aspects, such as the peaceful use of outer space, missile defence programmes and regional security should be addressed. Missiles should, therefore, not be addressed in isolation, regardless of their overall related aspects, all of which are essential to the life and security of nations.

A fourth and final element is the initiation of a comprehensive study within the United Nations aimed at preparing an ever fresh report on how missiles can be addressed and what measures may be envisaged in its wide national, regional and global context.

I would like to emphasize that the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/56/L.6 is, again, constructive on these four essential components. The only changes in this year's draft, in comparison to those of previous years, are procedural and related to the process that started just after the adoption of last year's resolution by the General Assembly.

In 1999, the first year it was introduced, the resolution on missiles requested the United Nations Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the issue of missiles in all its aspects. Accordingly, many States have submitted their views on the issue to the Secretary-General since then. The second resolution, in the year 2000, noted such replies by Member States and, in parallel, requested the United Nations Secretary-General to prepare a report on the issue of missiles in all its aspects with the assistance of governmental experts.

This year, the draft resolution naturally acknowledges, in the eighth preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 1, the fact that the Panel of Governmental Experts established by the Secretary-General held its first meeting in 2001 and intends to hold two more meetings next year to complete its reports. We hope that the Panel will finalize its report successfully; this would certainly make an important contribution to the whole issue.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its gratitude to the United Nations Secretary-General and to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, for their efforts to establish the Panel. We would also like very much to congratulate Ambassador Guerreiro of Brazil, the Chairman of the Panel, under whose expertise and diplomatic skills the first meeting of the Panel was successful.

My delegation hopes that, in view of all that has been done so far and as a sign of support by the international community for the role of the United Nations in this field, the draft resolution on missiles will enjoy even greater support from member States.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.6. Do any delegations wish to explain their position or vote before action is taken on the draft resolution?

Mr. Durrani (Pakistan): Pakistan welcomes the draft resolution entitled "Missiles" and will vote for it. Pakistan is in favour of developing a global treaty on missiles as part of a comprehensive disarmament programme. Accordingly, we have proposed that "the issue of missiles in all its aspects" be included as a separate item in the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. We cannot subscribe to arrangements that have been evolved in restricted forums of those States that already possess missiles to prevent the proliferation of missiles and missile capability by others. Pending the conclusion of a legal instrument on missiles, we are ready to consider universal measures aimed at reducing missile-related threats at all levels. These measures could range from de-alerting nuclear weapons and missile systems to developing multilaterally negotiated controls for the transfer of sensitive technologies. Nevertheless, these should be accompanied by alternative measures for maintaining a military balance, especially in volatile regions, and for enhancing cooperation in the relevant technologies for peaceful purposes.

We believe that there are elements missing in the draft resolution. First of all, it should acknowledge that the central security danger posed by missiles arises from the existing deployment of thousands of missiles equipped with nuclear weapons by some of the major Powers. Secondly, concern should have been expressed at unilateral and discriminatory measures that are presently maintained by certain States with regard to missiles. Thirdly, there is one important concept that does not find adequate reflection, and this is the need to promote the peaceful uses of the technologies involved.

The Chairman: If no more delegations wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting, we will proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.6.

Mr. Sattar (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.6, entitled "Missiles". This draft resolution was introduced by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran at the Committee's 20th meeting, on 31 October.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Lucia, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uruguay, Yugoslavia

Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.6 was adopted by 88 votes to none, with 57 abstentions.

The Chairman: I call now on delegations wishing to explain their votes or positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. McGinnis (United States of America): Draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.6, entitled "Missiles", raises a number of concerns for the United States. Last year, resolution 55/33 A requested the Secretary-General to appoint a panel of governmental experts and, with their assistance, to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. The Secretary-General duly proceeded to appoint the group of experts, and their work is now in midstream. We doubt that it is wise to call on Member States to submit further views until the two-year study has been completed. The United States remains concerned about the draft resolution's overall direction and political intent. In part, the net effect of the draft resolution could be to divert attention and resources away from ongoing missile non-proliferation efforts, including the draft international code of conduct.

The United States takes the danger of missile proliferation very seriously. We have actively participated in many international efforts to curb the spread of missiles and related equipment and technology, and we plan to continue to strengthen and reinforce that work. We encourage all concerned Member States to cooperate in the common cause. Past efforts in this field have often proved highly effective when they were conducted on a regional basis and

when they included the active participation of those States that were directly interested and affected. That basic strategy, along with other cooperative efforts that seek to prevent the proliferation of missiles and missile technology, seems to us far more likely to be productive than the broad and rather vague approach embodied in the draft resolution.

For all those reasons, the United States has abstained again this year on the draft resolution entitled "Missiles".

Mr. Sano (Japan): The proliferation of missiles as delivery vehicles of weapons of mass destruction is a matter of concern to Japan. We believe it poses a threat to peace and stability in both the international and the regional contexts. For that reason, Japan has been making efforts to reduce the threat posed by missiles, by preventing their proliferation. My delegation did not support draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.6, but rather abstained in the voting, because that draft resolution neither makes explicit reference to concerns about the proliferation of missiles as delivery vehicles of weapons of mass destruction nor recognizes the efforts being made, in which my country participates.

Regardless of that abstention, we remain committed to non-proliferation goals concerning such missiles and to promoting international and regional peace and stability through various means. We will also play an active role in that regard, including through participation in the United Nations panel of governmental experts on missiles.

Mr. Lee (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to explain its abstention in the vote on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.6. The proliferation of missiles as a means to deliver weapons of mass destruction seriously undermines international peace and stability. In particular, the test firings conducted in some regions in recent years have underscored the urgent need for the international community to address the issue of the proliferation of ballistic missiles. Given the inherent complexities of this issue, we believe that a step-by-step approach would be most practical. We note that the international community has made various efforts to resolve this issue at the bilateral and multilateral levels. Therefore, we need to build upon the achievements that have already been made.

With that end in mind, the Republic of Korea has participated in the work of the panel of governmental experts. We believe that the first session of the panel was a starting point, dealing with missiles in all aspects including the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

Since the draft resolution fails to adequately address some of those issues, my delegation abstained in the vote. However, we remain committed to helping the missile panel focus on the highest-priority areas.

Mr. Lint (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, as well as the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway align themselves with this explanation of vote.

Like last year, the European Union felt obliged to abstain in the vote on the draft resolution entitled "Missiles", contained this year in document A/C.1/56/L.6. Once again, the reason is not that the European Union does not share concerns about the risks associated with developments in missile technology. Rather, we believe that the draft resolution does not satisfactorily address an essential matter: the proliferation of missiles and missile technologies. Moreover, it makes no reference to concrete multilateral initiatives to combat the problem of proliferation. On a number of occasions, we firmly urged the inclusion of that element, and we regret that it was not incorporated into this year's draft resolution.

The European Union is concerned about the proliferation of ballistic missiles that could serve as delivery vehicles for weapons of mass destruction. We want to make a concrete contribution to strengthening multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation agreements and advocate a comprehensive multilateral approach. That is why the European Union has intensified its efforts to combat the proliferation of ballistic missiles. This is attested to by the outcome of the 14 May 2001 meeting of the Council of the European Union (General Affairs), the statements issued by the Göteborg European Council on 15 and 16 June 2001, and the Common Position adopted on 23 June 2001 at Brussels.

The European Union believes that the draft international code of conduct is the most concrete and ambitious initiative to combat the proliferation of

ballistic missiles, and we believe that it provides the best opportunity to achieve results in the short term. The Union therefore enthusiastically supports efforts towards the universality of the draft international code of conduct initiated at Ottawa last September by the members of the Missile Technology Control Regime. The draft code, which now has an independent existence, will be the subject of international negotiations in 2002 as part of a transparent, inclusive process that is open to all States on an equal footing. The European Union will play an active and constructive role to ensure that an international code of conduct against the proliferation of ballistic missiles is adopted in final form by the end of 2002. The code would be a politically binding document; once it is adopted, it will be of clear interest to the United Nations.

It was for those reasons that we were unable to support draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.6. Our abstention, however, should not be interpreted as a lack of commitment to the work of the United Nations panel of governmental experts; to the contrary, we hail the existence of the panel, which we believe could provide a useful platform for multilateral discussions and could thus enhance our understanding of these problems.

Nevertheless, it is not a forum for international negotiations. If experts from certain European Union countries continue to participate fully in the panel of experts, we will do so in order to contribute to the achievement of the stated objectives.

Ms. Moules (Australia): Australia agrees that the issue of missiles warrants international and United Nations attention. Regrettably, however, we continue to have a number of substantive difficulties with the draft resolution entitled "Missiles", including the absence in it of an expression of concern over ballistic missile proliferation. Australia therefore abstained once again in the vote on this draft resolution.

However, Australia is a strong and active supporter of ballistic missile non-proliferation efforts and is pleased that an Australian expert is participating in the United Nations experts panel on missiles. We welcome the panel's constructive first meeting and believe that it can make a useful contribution to raising awareness of the potentially destabilizing impact of missile proliferation on global security.

In this regard, Australia wishes to register its strong support for the international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation developed by the Missile Technology Control Regime. We encourage all countries to participate in negotiations to finalize the draft code and to sign on to that non-binding instrument when it is launched in 2002.

Australia believes that missile proliferation is an issue that the international community must continue to address actively and we will continue to support all constructive efforts to find solutions to the problem.

Mr. León González (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have asked for the floor in order very briefly to explain my country's position on the draft resolution we have just adopted.

Cuba supported draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.6 on missiles because we believe that it addresses a very important issue that must be debated by the General Assembly. My country believes that the issue of missiles must be discussed in a multilateral context of universal scope, without discrimination, in which all States have an opportunity to participate and not, as hitherto, in a very limited context with the participation of very few.

The debate on missiles is particularly important now that plans are being made to develop anti-ballistic missile defence systems that would spur the greater proliferation of such systems for military purposes. Obviously, Cuba opposes such plans, as we have often affirmed.

The Chairman: I should like to inform members that, at the next meeting of the Committee on Friday, 2 November, the Committee will take action on a number of draft resolutions. The list of those draft resolutions will be distributed in informal working paper No. 4, but I should like to read it out just to make sure that everybody is ready to take action. I ask delegations that might take exception to any of the draft resolutions to let us know in order that the Chair can make plans for our proceedings.

On Friday, in cluster 1, nuclear weapons, the Committee will take action on draft resolutions A/C.1/56/L.9/Rev.1, "African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty"; A/C.1/56/L.10/Rev.1, "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty"; A/C.1/56/L.24, "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas"; and A/C.1/56/L.25, "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

In cluster 3, outer space, we will take action on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.7, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space".

In cluster 4, conventional weapons, we will take action on draft resolutions A/C.1/56/L.47, "The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects". Here, I have to make a caveat. All this is dependent on the programme budget implications and on whether we will be aware of what all this is about. The infamous programme budget implications will be coming in. I say this because draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.47 will be ready for action if we have the programme budget implications. We will be hearing from the Secretary of the Committee about those very readable and very entertaining statements on financial implications.

In cluster 7, disarmament machinery, the Committee will take action on draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.18, "United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament".

I have read out all those draft resolutions that will be coming up on Friday. I want to make sure at this time that we will not be faced with some unexpected difficulties as far as these draft resolutions are concerned. I should like delegations to let us know if, at this point in time, they have some difficulties in proceeding with the list I have read out.

Mr. Antonov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I wish to identify a problem. We have spoken on a number of occasions to representatives of your Bureau about the Russian Federation's desire to see a decision adopted on Friday on the draft resolution on the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. We have already confirmed our readiness to proceed with the voting on that draft resolution on Friday. We did not wish to proceed today or Thursday because we wanted delegations to have the opportunity to consult with their capitals on this draft.

I would therefore be grateful if you, Sir, will allow us to proceed with the voting on Friday.

The Chairman: We will certainly be more than happy to take on board as many draft resolutions as we can on the various aspects of our work, including draft resolution A/C.1/56/L.1, which the representative of the Russian Federation mentioned earlier.

I shall take it, then, that we can proceed according to the list that I read out and that delegations will be ready to proceed accordingly. Working paper No. 4 will be distributed at the beginning of our meeting on Friday.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.